

# Covid Vaccination programme: the need for data to understand take-up by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities

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## Purpose

As with any major public health emergency, the actions taken to address it and limit poor experiences and outcomes are many, sometimes contested and often scrutinised. The current roll out of the vaccines to immunise people and protect them for COVID-19 has also been accompanied by significant circulation of misinformation, with some of it targeted at Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities.

Beyond voluntary and community organisations reporting the circulation of these false claims, two recent surveys have suggested that there may be a greater degree of hesitancy amongst these communities in taking-up the offer of a vaccination. The findings of these surveys should rightly lead us to ensure that public information campaigns reach and engage all communities effectively we need to take care not to conclude that BAME groups who are being offered that vaccine are rejecting it as currently we have no published data on the ethnic make-up of who has been offered the vaccine and whether there is a difference in take-up.

Our analysis of the ethnic make-up of the over 80s' (the key priority group currently) suggests that BAME groups make-up a very small proportion of the priority group.

As the data from 2011 Census is now nearly 10 years old we have used population forecasts for 2020 (Wohland et al., 2018<sup>1</sup>). The majority of people over the age of 80 are from the white ethnic groups as shown in figure 1.

**Figure 1 – number of people over 80 by ethnic group**

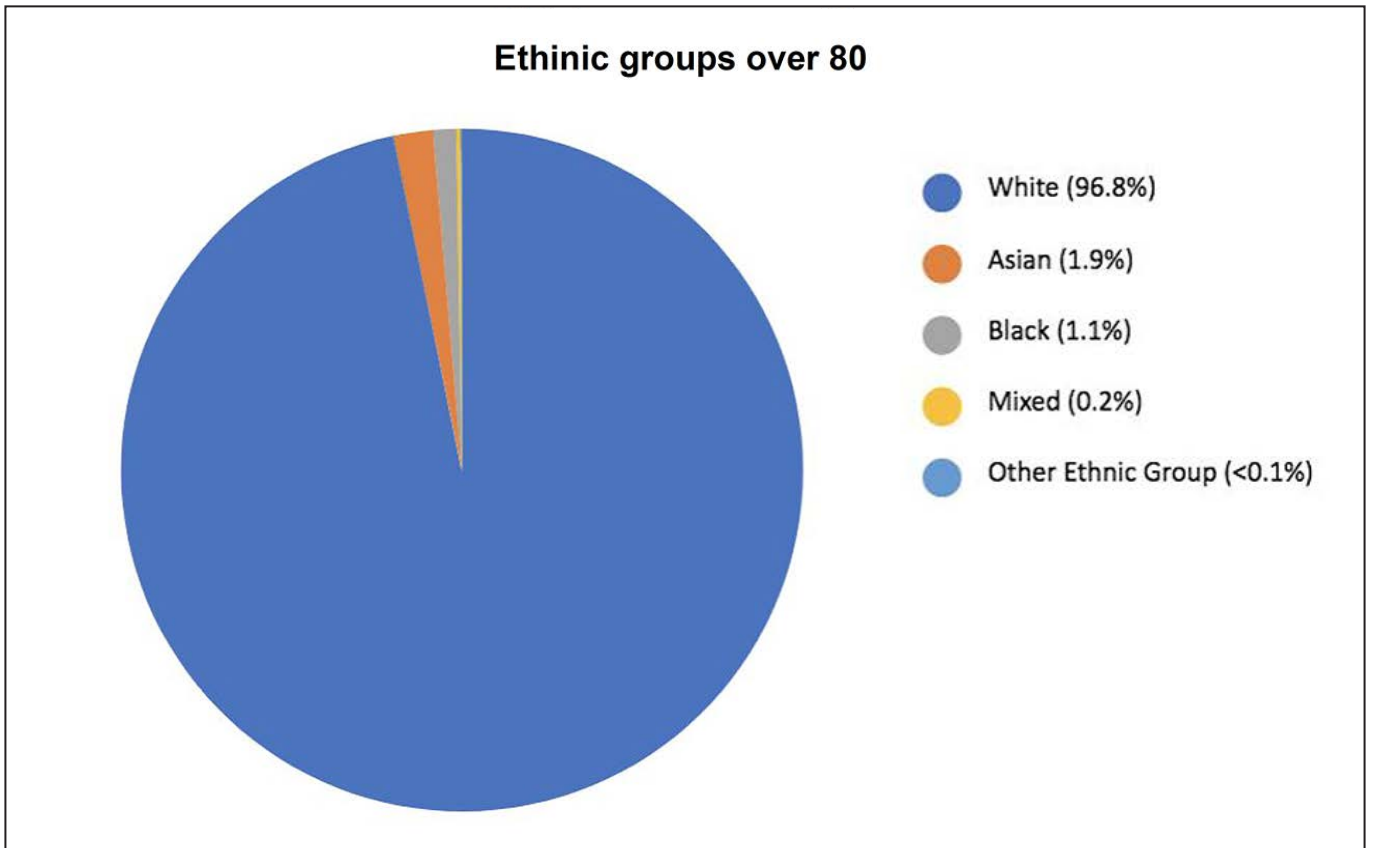
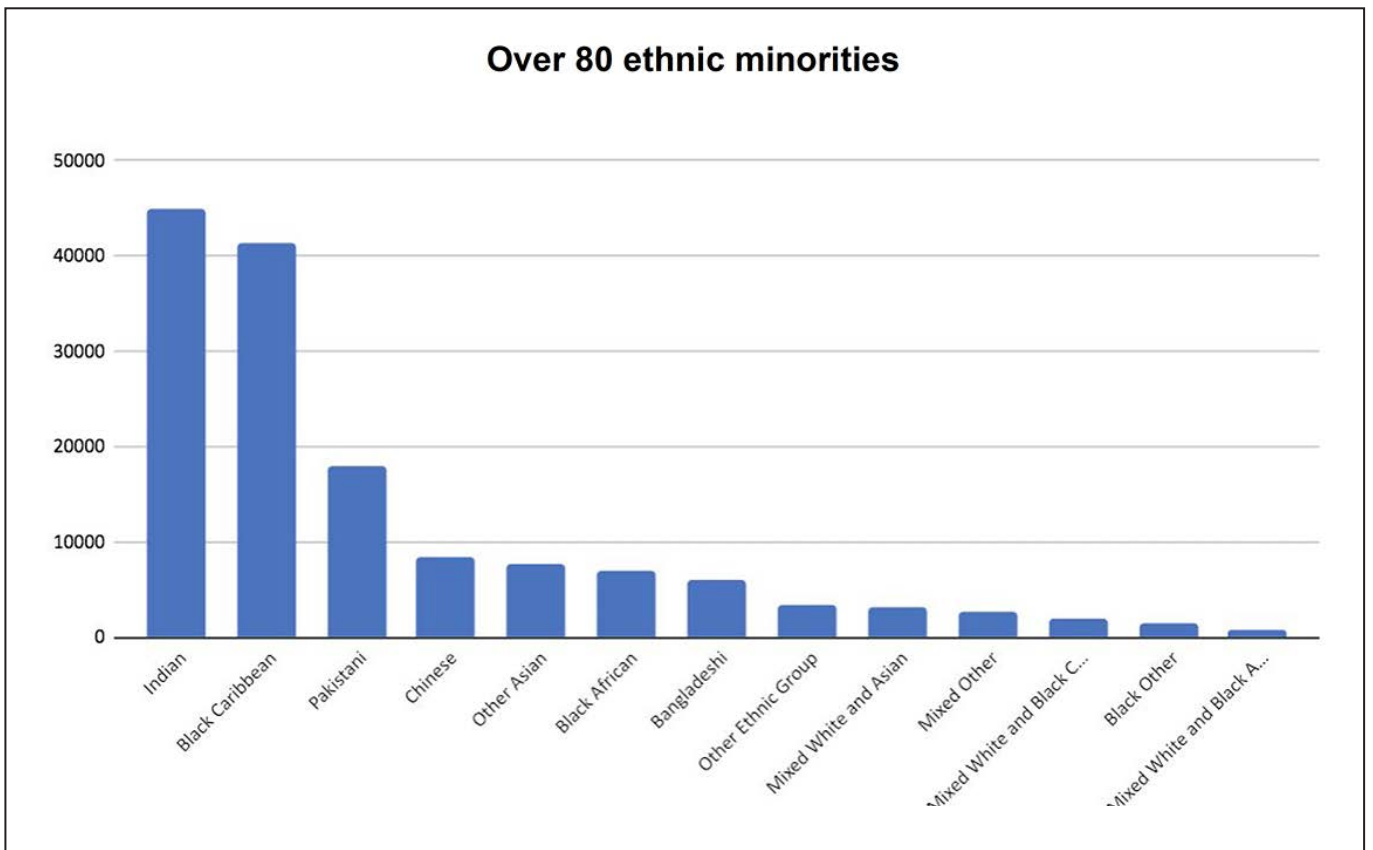


Figure 2 shows the number of people from ethnic minorities other than the white groups.

**Figure 2 – number of people over 80 by detailed ethnic group**



Source: Derived from population forecasts (Wohland et al., 2018)

This means that of the 4.6 million people in the over 80's priority group, only 146,000 are people from Black, Asian and Minority ethnic groups, around three per cent. In the absence of data on who has taken-up the vaccine, we would suggest current debates about vaccine hesitancy need to be treated with caution.

Of equal concern is that the way that priorities for the vaccine roll out have been set mean that BAME groups who have been repeatedly shown to be at greater risk of infection and death from Covid-19 will only be a small proportion of those who have been vaccinated to date. With little evidence that wave three of COVID-19 has changed who is being infected, this is likely to see the continuation of disproportionate numbers of deaths amongst BAME groups.

Table 1 shows the number of people aged 80 or over, the overall population of that ethnic group, the percentage who are over 80 and the number of local authorities where there are thirty or more people over the age of 80 in England.

**Table 1 – ethnic population over 80**

Ethnic group	Over 80	People	%age	LAs
White British	4,150,011	53,969,381	7.69%	323
White Irish	136,445	1,546,526	8.82%	317
White Other	80,211	2,677,649	3.00%	307
<b>White</b>	<b>4,366,667</b>	<b>58,193,556</b>	<b>7.50%</b>	
Mixed White and Black African	753	174,310	0.43%	1
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	1,990	426,684	0.47%	14
Mixed White and Asian	3,119	384,442	0.81%	21
Mixed Other	2,580	322,964	0.80%	17
<b>Mixed</b>	<b>8,442</b>	<b>1,308,400</b>	<b>0.65%</b>	
Indian	45,024	1,614,122	2.79%	157
Pakistani	17,837	1,216,149	1.47%	80
Bangladeshi	5,913	433,365	1.36%	35
Chinese	8,387	417,741	2.01%	66
Other Asian	7,768	411,863	1.89%	50
<b>Asian</b>	<b>84,929</b>	<b>4,093,240</b>	<b>2.07%</b>	
Black African	6,850	825,686	0.83%	43
Black Caribbean	41,440	671,218	6.17%	107
Black Other	1,394	149,560	0.93%	11
<b>Black</b>	<b>49,684</b>	<b>1,646,464</b>	<b>3.02%</b>	
<b>Other Ethnic Group</b>	<b>3,404</b>	<b>468,538</b>	<b>0.73%</b>	<b>24</b>

Source: Derived from population forecasts (Wohland et al., 2018)



## Recommendations

- 1 Publish vaccination rates by ethnicity and sex in addition to existing breakdown by age.
- 2 Review the evidence of the Joint Committee On Vaccination and Immunisation on the groups that should be prioritised and consider adjusting the priorities for vaccination.
- 3 Ensure that the marketing of the vaccine reaches and engages Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.
- 4 Challenge misinformation circulating about the vaccine.

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<sup>1</sup> Wohland, Pia; Rees, Phil; Norman, Paul; Lomax, Nikolas and Clark, Stephen (2018). NEWETHPOP - *Ethnic population projections for UK local areas 2011-2061*. [Data Collection]. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive. 10.5255/UKDA-SN-852508